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THE
CRITIC proved NO CRITIC:

OR, A
New Year's Gift to the anonymous Author

OF THE
PANEGYRICAL CRITICISM,
ON AN ODE THAT WAS PUBLISHED IN THE
CHELMSFORD CHRONICLE,

AND ADDRESSED TO THE
MEMBERS OF A MUSICAL SOCIETY.

By O X O N I E N S I S.

*Some are bewilder'd in the maze of schools,
And some made concomb Nature meant but fools:
In search of wit these lose their common sense,
And then turn Critics in their own defence.
If Mævius scribbles in Apollo's spight,
There are, who still judge worse than he can write.*

POPE.

*Libels, like spurious brats, run up and down,
Which their dull parents are asham'd to own.*

OTWAY.

CHELMSFORD:

Printed and Sold by L. HASSALL;

Sold also by Messrs. Toft and Lobb, at Chelmsford; Mr. Smitheman, at Braintree; and Mr. Fitchatt, at Brentwood. M.DCC.LXVI.

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By O K O N I E N S I S.

Some are furnished in the name of J. J. J.
And some made comments without name and date:
In search of our little book their common sense
And their own Critics in their own defence
It is a little better in quality, but
There are some who will say, "it is not better."

That the book is better, and up and down,
Which their little book was not equal to show
OTWAY.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
HARVARD
2.15.15
18.12.15

THE CRITIC proved NO CRITIC: Or, &c.

I Presumed, gentle Reader, a short time back, to employ a leisure hour in writing a little Ode on Music, and addressed it to the Members of the Musical Society at Chelmsford. How it came to be composed in Pindaric measure was mere whim, having been newly reading, I suppose, something of the kind. I never thought, much less expressed, that it had the least poetical merit; nor was it sent to the *Chelmsford Chronicle* with any other view, than to pay a friendly compliment to my musical acquaintance. This my crime;—for which some *anonymous* Scribbler has treated me in the most illiberal manner.—Had I wrote on a subject that favoured of disaffection to my King, or that had an immoral tendency, I would have submitted and kissed the rod which lashed me:—but to be attacked in the dark, and abused for spending a few minutes in a very innocent, and (as I flatter myself) pardonable amusement, is so uncommonly mean and malicious, that I must be a coward indeed to let the affront go unnoticed. Many Gentlemen, however, of learning, have strongly desired me not to take the least notice of so despicable a Performance; but the boasts of the Author, his Adherents and Printer, *that it is unanswerable*, induce me to expose *his* Vanity, and to clear the mist of Ignorance from *their* eyes.

It is believed in general that the *learned* and most elaborate Pamphlet, intitled, “A Panegyric Criticism, &c.” is not the child of one brain, but the joint production of a Junto. So far is certain, that we have discovered an *old piece of curiosity*, (~~and a very curious one~~) to have a principal hand in it. The Piece itself is so unequal a performance, that a reader of moderate capacity may know it to be the patch-work of several hands. Nay, I have

been assured, that in order to crush my little body, this Junto of Conspirators have had frequent meetings and consultations at the

ERUDITORUM RESPUBLICA:

that they have been often couped up two days together, and fed very sparingly, to prevent, I suppose, the *Pingue Ingenium* Ovid speaks of; or perhaps, from a persuasion (according to the old proverb) that "a full belly makes an empty head."

Without doubt this respectable fraternity had their several departments, so that it must have been a most entertaining sight to have viewed them through the key-hole of the garret-door. I seem to see the *Old Piece of Curiosity* seated in an arm-chair at the head of an ante-diluvian table that has a scanty thread-bare fragment of baize on it: His chair is elevated on bricks, and a coal-tub, bottom upwards, serves him for a footstool. — His department is to *think*; and it *does one's heart good* to see how wise he looks. On his right and left sit two other *Thinkers*: they seem to look witty; but their tongues discover them to be flatter'd pictures of *stupid and pointless ridicule*. Next them an ill-favoured, sour-looking pedant is extremely busy in hunting after scraps of Latin: opposite to him sits their *Scribe*, who is attentively subservient to record any stupidity that gets vent. Below him is their *Orthographer*; who, by his great dexterity in turning over the leaves of a *Spelling Book*, seems well qualified for picking of pockets. Over-against him is their *Stopper General*, having a treatise on colons, semicolons, &c. with rules how and when to use them. The Printer's Press Devil makes up the scene: he waits at the bottom of the table to carry Dulness piping hot to the *Composer*.

No wonder, therefore, that with all these helps and advantages, the *Panegyric* Criticism is adjudged an *unanswerable* and *first-rate* performance. For my part, I am blind to its merit: I have read it over and over, coolly and without prejudice, and must ingenuously confess, that I believe, *en verité*, nine Taylors have a better claim to the name of man, than ninety-nine of such a Junto have to the title of *Critic*. On this persuasion, I shall take the liberty to address them in the *singular* Number. Therefore,

Mr. CRITIC,

FIRST and foremost let me pay you the compliments of the season; I wish you health and happiness, and the return of many joyous years. From the consideration of your great age, you cannot hope, indeed, to live much longer; but my good wishes are not the less sincere. — I am, Sir, administer a little comfort, in order to support your spirits during the perusal of the following pages. — Nothing, I flatter myself,

myself, can afford you sweeter satisfaction, than to know what a great character your lucubrations bear in general. — I have the honour to be sometimes admitted into Gentlemens company, much so since your publication; and they agree, *nemine contradicente*, that your business, according to your Title Page, was to write a *Panegyrical Criticism* on my Ode; but that your talking about “ Tarantulas, Mount Vesuvius, Slawkenburgius, Prince Ferdinand and Lord G—— S——e, Prometheus and Tantalus, Wigs and Independent Freeholders, Luther and Liberty, Country Parsons, Bee-hives, Seven-mouth’d Niles, Realms of Sesostris, the Ganges, Pactolus, Po, Mississippi, River St. Lawrence, B——p of G——r, Magic Numbers, Female Reputation, Elusian Mysteries, Noxious Vapours, Tradesmens Credit, Milton’s Spirits, Free Masons, &c. &c. &c. &c.” I say, Sir, it is the general opinion, that this hodge-podge has made your performance look much like that pretty picture, at the beginning of Horace’s Art of Poetry; where the Painter has drawn a human face on the neck of a horse, covered the body and other parts with feathers, and finished it with the addition of an ugly fishe’s tail. — As you are remarkably fond of Horace, it would be a pity not to quote his comparison:

“ Credite, Pisones, isti tabulæ fore librum
Perfimilem, cujus velut ægri somnia, vanæ
Finguntur species; ut nec pes, nec caput uni
Reddatur formæ.”

Which I beg leave to paraphrase thus: — “ Believe me, my musical friends, the *Panegyrical Criticism* is not less ridiculous than the picture: It has neither head nor tail: The author of it was certainly *light-headed* when he wrote it; and, like a sick man, dreamed of rivers (Po, St. Lawrence, &c.) running over his bed; of being stung with *Bees*, bit by the *Tarantula*, and marked with the *Free Masons* red-hot Salamander; with many other preposterous conceits.” — “ But where am I wandering? Pardon me, good Sir. I now enter on my task:” which is to prove that you are the most despicable Critic in Christendom.

Your first sneer is levelled at the preface, as you call it, to the translation of Mr. Cotton’s Elegy: — This, you say, “ contains a fund of learning, and most judicious remarks on the nature of translation.” Not content with this, you endeavour to ridicule the expression *transfuse the Spirit*, by making a Note on it, lest the Reader may disregard the Italics. — What an ill Star presided, when you made this most unlucky beginning? So unlucky, indeed, that from my heart I pity you. The preface, Sir, was not mine, neither the expression *transfuse the Spirit*: I marked it in the News-Paper as a quotation; but *Prejudice* blinded your eyes, dimmed your spectacles, and has drawn you into a

quagmire, from which not the united force of the *Junto* can release you; for read, thou poor, poor Critic, and to thy confusion:

"An observation that Boileau makes, and a rule he lays down in speaking of translations, will properly find their place here, and serve to explain still better what I would establish." * "To translate servilely, phrase by phrase, and word by word, is preposterous; nothing can be more unlike the original than such a copy. It is not to shew, it is to disguise the Author; and he who has only known him in this dress, would not know him in his own. A good writer, instead of taking this inglorious and unprofitable task upon him, will *joûter contre l'originale*, rather imitate than translate, and rather emulate than imitate; he will *transfuse* the Sense and *Spirit* of the original into his own work, and," &c.

Lord Bolingbroke's second Letter, on the Study of History.

A little farther, in the same Letter, his Lordship observes; "We translate the sense and reason, we *transfuse the Spirit* and Force; but we imitate only the particular Graces of the Original."

Here, Reader, I think we may view Prejudice in the vilest and blackest colours. My malicious Antagonist thought the above quotation and expression were mine, and accordingly strove to snarl; little thinking that I had the authority of one of the greatest Men that ever wrote. Was I to rest my point here, it would be a full and proper answer, having thus convicted his Prejudice, by the clearest evidence, discovered his Ignorance, and shewn how totally unfit he is to criticise. —What will be his answer to this? why ten to one but he abuses me for reading Lord Bolingbroke. But let him take this as my reply, *that Gold is valuable, tho' spotted with Dirt*. On every subject but Religion, I read him with admiration.

Thus much for your noble beginning. —The expression *dimply sweet*, falls next under your tremendous lash. The Latin is *plurimus decor*; and the translator is entirely at liberty to use those terms that are most expressive of so much beauty. But *dimply* is a word you never met with, and therefore is improper to be used. But read, thou King of Critics;

"*Dimply damsel, sweetly smiling.*"

Philip's Ode to Miss Margeret Pulteney.

Give me a reason why *dimply* should not be joined to an adjective as well as a substantive: two adjectives frequently meet together; there is an instance of it in the above line. —Great success, Sir, attends you hitherto. We will now introduce the little Ode, that has

* The Preface that was inserted in the Chelmsford Chronicle.

given you so much trouble: by the time we get to the end of it, the reader will doubtless judge you worthy to be crown'd with a—fool's cap.

ENTER STROPHE I.

"Hark! the lark is on the wing,
Bidding hedge-row warblers sing."

These two first lines you compliment with the title of *Originals*; intimating the absurdity of the lark's *bidding* or calling to the other birds to sing: but your own ignorance and want of reading are far more evident, than is the absurdity.—The following lines prove me an *Original*.

"Up springs the lark,
Shrill-voic'd and loud, the messenger of morn,
Amid the dawning clouds, and from their haunts
Calls up the tuneful nations." Thompson's Seasons, in the Spring.

Your Criticism appears very *just* too, if we consider the office of the lark. Shakespeare stiles him the *Herald* of the morn, "that gives
"sweet tidings of the sun's uprise."

"Now hear the lark,
The Herald of the morn, &c." Romeo and Juliet.

Without doubt then it is very *absurd* and *unpoetical* to say, that the ark (as a Herald) bids or summons the feather'd race to join with him.

"To hail Apollo with a lay,
And usher in the welcome day."

Thus, Sir, is the lark "exalted (to use your own words) in the genuine spirit of poetry (by Thompson, Shakespeare, and others,) into a higher nature," and made, over all birds, the Herald of the morn, and Gentleman-usher to the day. — "But why are the hedge-row warblers to sing? Not because it is their custom every morning, but to celebrate the return of the Chelmsford Concert." "Pretty rogues! continue you, that they should be so sensible and good-natured!" — Just as *sensible* and *good-natured*, I suppose, Mr. infallible Critic, as the inanimate strings, which are so *ready* and *willing* to consecrate St. Cecilia's day;

"Hark! how the *willing* strings obey,
To consecrate the happy day." Dryden's Misc. vol. 4.

Then you add—"I must not dismiss the first Strophe without taking notice of three beautiful prosopopæias." Better for the gummy lining of your old jacket, if you had: six rumples would have been at least saved.

First, the *morn* is not suffered to *awake*. What says *Pope*?

"Hear, how the birds on every blooming spray,
With joyous music, *wake* the dawning day."

If

If the birds *wake* the *day*, or *morn*, which is the same thing, to be sure the morn awakes; does it not, ye logicians?

Secondly, the minutes are not suffered to fly.—Ten thousand passages could be brought to support this expression; but a few will do.

"Fly swift ye hours; ye sluggish minutes fly,
Bring back my love," &c.

Oldham.

"Fly swift ye minutes and contract the space
Of Time, that holds me from her dear embrace."

Ditto.

"Move quickly sun, and fly a lover's pace,
Leave weeks and months behind thee in thy race."

Dryden, C. of Gran.

I, gentle reader, wanted *time* to move a little *briskly*, and presumed to express myself thus:

"Fly then, ye minutes, haste the happy eve."

And my all-wise Critic says it is a beautiful *proso-popæia*; of which I certainly can entertain no doubt, as the above passages *support* his opinion.—But here comes the wit.—My antagonist, incredible to believe, is growing polite: see, reader, see; he makes a Gentleman of the third *proso-popæia*.

"O your humble servant glad Mr. Roof."

Great and noble—pregnant and poignant with learning and argument.—I wish it was in the power of any man, with or without a *figure*, to make a Gentleman of you, Mr. Critic.—So *glad Roof* is a nonsensical and unpoetical expression, is it, Sir?—What said a famous poet?

"The lovely swain

Charm'd with his pipe the wond'ring plain,
And trees lean'd their attentives branches down,
While the *glad hills*, loth the sweet sounds to lose,
Lengthen'd their echoes," &c.

Oldham—Mosch.

Here is a groupe of *proso-popæias*! the plain *wonders*; the branches *attend*, and hills are *glad* at hearing music. Hard partiality this, reader, that Mr. Roof, at Chelmsford, is not to be allowed by Oxoniensis, or rather his Critic, either of these favours.—Tell me, thou poor unlucky Critic, why the *Roof* of a concert room may not be stiled *glad*, or why *glad Roof* is not so poetical an expression as *glad Hills*? ~~And so~~

Thus we finish Strophe the first:—and now I beg leave to ask your Worship how you relish this method of proceeding? I hope it sits well on your nice Pindaric stomach; if not, let me advise you to breathe awhile; too great a dose at once may make you sick: remember not the

the *fate of Icarus*, but the effects (if some say true) of the Medicines, which I prescribed a short time back for one of your secret committee; a prescription (let me whisper in your ear) that gave birth to the *Panegyrical Criticism*.

ANTISTROPHE I.

You are kind, indeed, to treat this Antistrophe so gently. I thank you, Sir; and shall only observe, that, from your evident design in publishing your Criticism, from your endeavour to stab me in the dark, and from some particular passages of the performance, I am fully convinced your *sense* and *politeness* are so very moderate, that *loud discord chat*, and *whispers rude*, would disturb the band, if you was permitted to hear the concert. If you are expert in taking a hint, I flatter myself we shall be never honoured with your company.

EPODE I.

Harmony, you remark, I invoke as one of the graces, "to tune the strings, refine the ears of the performers, and particularly to assist them;"

"Sweet tones to swell without alloy;"

and this you suggest, with your self-sufficient air of ridicule, is stupid and unpoetical too. But why may not harmony be thus invoked, and with as great propriety as she was on St. Cecilia's day to *prepare the lays* of the performers, &c.——as follows,

"O sacred harmony, prepare our lays,
While on Cecilia's day we sing your praise,
From earth to heaven our warbling voices raise."

Shadwell's Ode. Dryden's Misc. vol. 4.

Thus the poet Shadwell, with Dryden's approbation, is permitted to invoke her Ladyship to prepare for, and keep every thing in order during the concert; nay, to ride post haste with their voices to heaven, and yet poor Oxoniensis must not take the liberty to employ her at all:——hard partiality again.

Now reader, give a whet to thy understanding, and rub thy eyes, that thou mightest see clearly and comprehend the following keen and most incomparable satyr——"The concluding couplet, says my Critic, is extatic, viz.

"O the pleasures hence arising,
Rapt'rous pleasures past surmising."

To prove that it is not so, regard nicely the *Sterling* wit that follows:——"If Handel could have set this Ode to music, with what warbling sweetness would he have run-divisions upon this line,

"Rapt'rous pleasures past surmising."

"Spirit

"Spirit of Handel, methinks I hear thee!"

"Rapturous pleasures, pa
Bravo, Bravo." oh! oh!

But why is the above thought more ridiculous than the following?

"O the pleasing, pleasing anguish,
When we love, and when we languish,
Wishes rising,
Thoughts surprising." Add. Rose.

How pretty these lines would run if set to music!

Wishes rising, thou
thoughts surprising, wishes rising,
thoughts surprising, wishes rising,
thoughts surprising, wishes rising,
thoughts surprising, wishes rising,
dum diddle, di, dum, do.

Bravissimo! Bravissimo!

Excuse me, reader, for inserting this second-hand, this stale, stupid mode of ridicule. With reluctance I did it. It will serve, however, to shew that folly may be dressed very foolishly.

STROPHE II.

A sneer is levell'd at the expression, "Slowly wake the graceful air."—Musical strings are frequently awakened by poets, as also pipes, harps, &c.

"Hark! how the *waken'd strings* resound!
Awake, my pipe, in every note express
Fair Stella's death, and Colinet's distress."
Wake the British harp again."

Oldham.

Philips's Past.

Philips's Pind. Ode.

How then is it unpoetical to awake Music herself, if it is usual to awake many of her instruments? But you are all wisdom, and I must submit.—This Strophe concludes, in your opinion, with a most ridiculous *ecphrasis*, viz.

"This this is Music, that will never never cloy."

That redundant expletives are allowed and frequently used in Alexandrian lines, sometimes for grace, and sometimes to make up the feet, can be proved by a thousand quotations: a few will suffice:

"These, these are joys the Gods, &c." Dryden's Misc. Vol. 2.

"Thus, thus improve the lasting Bliss." Hor. 9 Ode, Book 1. trans.

Ditto Trans. of Petronius Arbiter.

"Where we never shall return,
Never, never more."

Ditto Vol. 3. Hor. Ode 3. B. 2.

But

But shew me a line, you'll say, with a double *apophony*. — I really think, Sir, you are one of the most unlucky Critics that ever presumed to snarl.

"Sure thou in hapless hour of time was born,
When blighting mildews spoil'd the growth of corn,
Or blasting winds o'er blossom'd hedge-rows pass,
To kill the promis'd fruits, and scorch the grass;
Or when the moon, by wizard charm'd, foreshows,
Blood-stain'd in foul eclipse, impending woes,
Untimely born, ill luck betides thee still,"

Philips's Past.

For ah! read,

"*These, these* are Blessings, that will ever, ever flow."

Spratt, Bishop of Rochester, in his Ode on the Creation.

ANTISTROPE II.

You open your remarks on this Antistrophe most wittily indeed. My lines are,

"Now distinct a Solo play,
Grace the subject not away;
But with Judgment Temper taste."

I took the liberty to request solo players not to run into that extreme of endeavouring to grace every note: as distinctness or simplicity is as much required in some passages, as graceful turns are in others. And upon this, you observe with acuteness, that I advise the performers not to *grace too much*. Shrewd satire truly! — But if you have judgment sufficient to know that there is difference between proper and improper graces, you will be ashamed of your puerile remark. — As to those lines, soft soothing plaints, &c. — the judicious Editor of the *Chelmsford Chronicle* has given you a proper answer. — In the description of the chorus, you cavil at the expression *reflex fingers*; notwithstanding the celebrated Philips says,

"His Fingers, *reflex*, traverse to and fro,
As in pursuit of Harmony they go."

5th Past.

As it requires a peculiar art to make the organ roar in a full chord, you are not capable of judging whether it is a proper or improper expression.

EPODE the last.

And welcome too: for what is a more disagreeable task than to review pointless criticism.

"Apollo drives the Brave to Arms."

B

You

You are pleased to be very merry with this line; and I must say very impudent in regard to the reflection you draw from it, to cast on Lord ——— at the very time that his Prince is shewing him favour. But good manners is not a qualification of yours, as we shall presently shew: but to proceed:

“How does the thund’ring martial song
Provoke the military throng;
The Hautboys and the warlike Fife,
With clamours of the deafning Drum,
Make Peasants bravely hazard Life.”

Dryd. Vol. 4.

Now for a little of your wit. ——— “That is, when they are not in a humour for broken heads and bloody noses, and be they ever so obstinately bent against it, *make* them, whether they will or no. *Make* sturdy peasants fight! defend us! ’tis to *make* lions and tigers obey. In truth it must be acknowledged, this is a most striking instance of the power of music! what would Prince Ferdinand have given for a strain that would have *made* ——— fight.” ——— I presume then, my good reader, that *make* in the above quotation has the same meaning as my *drives*; words used to express that impetuous ardor for battle with which brave soldiers are animated, when they hear the warlike instruments: for

The soldiers leap transported from the ground:

When such harmonious sounds invite to arms,

’Tis sure that valiant men feel secret charms.

Hopkins’s Descript. of Battle. ——— Dryd. Misc. Vol. 2.

I must still think, therefore, notwithstanding my Critic’s *learned arguments*, that it is not unpoetical to say Apollo or Music, by a sudden animating impulse hurries or *drives on the brave to arms*. ——— Wonderful are the effects, says my antagonist, which I attribute to music; — not so wonderful as the following,

How martial music every reason warms?

And men turn heroes at the sound.

Pope:

The concluding lines of this epode are not criticised on, but introduced to make way for the most vile and shameful affront to the respectable company that attend the Chelmsford Concert.

“Ah! gallants, then, I trow, ye are upon the point of being happy, would but Harmony kindly exert a still farther power, and blow out the candles. Then might the disconsolate C——n, should he be present, chance to forget his Catharina. Then ——— !!!” O sic ———

I love sharp satire, from obsceneness free,
Not impudence that preaches modesty.

Soames’s Translation of Boileau’s Art of Poetry.

A proper Gentleman, indeed, you are to talk of the *ingenuus pudor* so becoming youth: and disregard that decency, the want of which Pope tells us is want of sense. Is this right to fall from the tongue of a man who takes on him to instruct, presuming, as he says, on the *superiority of his years*? — How dare you, Sir, to sully, even in thought, the honour of those numerous fair, who favour us with their company; in whose lovely cheeks VIRTUE blooms triumphant? — How dare you suggest, how dare you think that the ingenious author of the Elegies is inclined to libertinism? How dare you thus wantonly trample on a character so transcendently brighter than your own; on a man, so much more and better known than yourself; on a scholar, so infinitely your superior; witness his elegant Latin Elegies, and your poultry Criticism? — In short, how dare you pay so gross an affront in general to the Gentry that attend the Concert. Nothing surely but the agapæ, the love-feasting nights of a certain sect of *Low-beels* (your cousin-germans) when they put out their candles, could have inspired your lecherous brain with such vile suggestions. — Know then, vain man, if thy foot ever presumes to pollute our tuneful floor, thy age shall not prevent the proper chastisement for impudence, indecency and ill-manners. If thou reachest the bottom of the stairs without breaking thy neck, thank God for thy escape, alter thy favourite Horace a little, and say, *sic me castigavit Apollo*. — In this rough but just manner do I finish your most *elaborate, learned* and *witty* Criticism. Whether you deserve the name of Critic, the reader is by this time a judge. Heartily tired of my dull task, I shall prepare for a conclusion, assuring you that I shall ever condemn myself for engaging with so mean an antagonist.

It would be ingratitude in me to conclude without shewing some respect to the *learned* advice you give me. Considering the plan of my little Ode, you advise me *very judiciously* to make an addition to it, by displaying the power of music in the bite of the Tarantula, being never *taken notice of*, as you remember, by any poet. Surprising, indeed, that so great a scholar, who has qualified himself (as appears through the whole of this Pamphlet) for a poetical Critic, by his extensive reading in, and study of the English poets, should never meet with the following lines; especially as Dryden thought the author a good writer, from his introducing so many of his pieces into his miscellanies.

“ If Sounds can heal the pois’nous Insect’s Bite,
Why not the sting of love? For love is sure
One kind of poison.”

—— Higgons, Gen. Cong.

But, supposing Higgons had not been before-hand with us, I really should not have liked to introduce the “grim, frightful, hairy reptile, the sight of which (as you express it) would be apt to terrify per-

sons of weak nerves, merely from its ugliness, and whose Idea is sufficient to make the stoutest shudder :” because my Intention, my Plan, and Endeavour was to

“ Bring gentlest thoughts that into language glide,
Bring softest words that into numbers slide.” Oldham.

What ! in a Pindaric Ode ! I seem to hear you say :—“ Pindaric Odes, Sir, should be all sublime, all fire and tow ;—volcanoes belching out flames, overwhelming cities, and spreading darkness and desolation round.”—Softly, softly, my good Mr. *Pindaricus secundus* :—Congreve once had the presumption to write a Pindaric Ode ;—let us take a stanza, and hear what dreadful, horrible sublimities he introduced.

“ Come all ye love-sick maids and wounded swains,
And listen to her healing strains :

A wondrous balm between her lips she wears,

Of sov'reign force to soften cares :

’Tis piercing as your thoughts, and melting as your tears,

And this through ev’ry Ear she does impart

(By tuneful breath diffus’d) to every heart.

Swiftly the gentle charmer flies,

And to the tender grief soft air applies,

Which, warbling mystick sounds,

Cements the bleeding Panther’s wounds.”

Pindaric Ode on Mrs. Arabella Hunt singing. Dryden’s *Misc.* Vol. 3.

Take heed, Sir, don’t read *panther* for *panter* in the last line. A panther is a “grim, frightful, hairy” creature, that will better suit your *Volcano* and *Tarantula* Odes.—I doubt not, reader, but you see from hence the complexion of my Critic’s mind ; that he has the clearest idea of Pindaric poetry, and a noble set of sublime images. He says he is no poet ; (and logicians would in consequence say he is no poetical critic) but he is modest ; he certainly is a poet ; such lofty thoughts, such towering flights, as evinced in his advice to me, must and will have vent. What a favour would he confer on all poets, would he but publish his Pindaric opinions and writings !—nay, if it was but an ode or two he wrote “about thirty years ago, when he was in love.” So great a genius must even, at any time of life, give strong marks of a sublime understanding. How happy should I in particular be, to read the productions of so wise, so good a friend, who treats me as he asserts, with *tenderness* and humanity ! With what pleasure should I—(excuse me, kind reader, a moment while I see the contents of a letter just brought me)—To Mr. Oxoniensis—what can this mean ?—Good Heavens—surely my eyes deceive me—*Risum tenentis amici* ;—O Mr. Critic ! I give you joy, for I am ready to burst with it. Read, Sir, read ; and participate of my happiness.

[15]
To Mr. OXONIENSIS.

SIR,

SEEING yesterday a Pamphlet wrote against an Ode of yours, and that your Critic has unpolitely attacked you in the dark, I think it but just that you should see some of his poetry. I know the principal author of the Panegyric Criticism well. The following is a copy of verses which he sent to a relation of mine, about thirty years ago, to whom he paid his addresses. If they will be of any use to you, they are at your service. You will be pleased not to inquire of the bearer from whom or whence this comes.

I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

Jan. 8, 1766.

FLORA.

Goddeſs from Olympus ſent,
I for you with love-flames burn;
If my Death you would prevent,
You muſt burn for me in turn.

II.

Like belching fires of Mount Ætna,
Your bright eyes inflame my breaſt;
Which throws me into ſuch a fit-ah!
That at night I cannot reſt.

III.

Your frown is a Tarantula;
Benumb'd I fall into a trance;
Your ſmile revives; I ſigh for you ah!
If you ſing, I up and dance.

IV.

Come love me, Deary, if you can oh!
I will poetize your charms;
As fires burſt from a Volcano,
I will ruſh into your arms.

July 25th, 1736.

All from your conſtant

STREPHON.

* This Line, my Angel, alludes to the Power that Muſic has over the Bite of the Tarantula.

Well, my dear friend Mr. Critic, all this was unexpected; and I muſt ingenuouſly confeſs to you I begin to pull in my horns. Had I dreamt you had been ſuch a nonpareil of a poet, I ſhould not have preſumed to laugh at you ſo much; but paſt words cannot be recall'd. All the ſatisfaction I can now make you is, to take a ſpeedy and com-
plaiſant leave.

You accuſe me, Sir, of vanity. Self-defence now becomes diſagreeable to me: though I hope it will be pardoned in a ſtranger, who

is far from his native soil, far from his intimate friends, who know his disposition, who know his heart. — I told the public, in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Cotton, that “*I despaired of doing his Elegies justice.*” I told the public, in a little preface to a sermon, that “no person was more sensible of its defects than myself; and that I hoped time and experience would enable me to make them a more acceptable present.” — Lay, Sir, your hand on your bosom, and ask your heart honestly, if these professions are consistent with a *vain disposition*? — As I mention my sermon, I must observe to you, that I have been informed, you are about publishing a criticism on that likewise. But out of pity for the many mistakes you have already made in the character of a critic, and from pure good-nature, let me advise you, before you publish, to read Tillotson’s Discourse on *evil-speaking*. Though you accuse me of vanity and of affecting to be an original, I was not above building on his foundation, and using some of his materials. By regarding this advice, you may perhaps avoid running into another such unlucky mistake, as the ridiculing Lord Bolingbroke’s expression, *transfuse the spirit*.

You ask me, Sir, if I have treated grey hairs with irreverence, and respectable characters with undistinguished buffoonery? Before I answer the question, you must tell me whether you mean that gentleman who *politely* called me a *buffoon*, a *crackfart*, and a *jack-pudding*: and that divine who most reverently stiled me a *devil*, *goblin*, and *bobgoblin*? — You are very prolix in your reasons for publishing your Criticism, and not signing your name to it: from which you draw your own conclusion, *viz.* “That it is a very tender method of acting, and is intended as a benefit:” — most certainly so, as it is done at the very time that I am asking the public to honour me with their names as subscribers to a volume of miscellaneous poetry. — But perhaps you intend the benefit and compliment to the public, to undeceive them; they not having sense enough of their own to judge of my poetical abilities. In short, your behaviour appears very obliging in which ever light we view it. Nay, you are most extraordinary obliging; for the Reviewers above favour authors with a perusal of their works, but you most candidly damn mine, before it is sent to the press. — As for all specious arguments you can bring, in regard to your attacking me in the dark; Bishop Hoadley’s remark on his anonymous antagonist is a full answer:

“The *c* is somewhat of wisdom, perhaps, but surely there is little of goodness and fairness in this Conduct.”

Preface to his Sermon.

In your concluding note you ask me “If I venerate the names of Milton and Dryden?” (as for Dryden, witness my quotations from him on

on your criticisms) and tell me that I should reverence *his* memory:—ah! thou despicable insignificant snarler! I see thy drift, thy envy and *malice*. But know

— “ Though poor and artless be my vein,
Menalcas seems to like my simple strain:
 And while that he delighteth in my song,
 Which to the good *Menalcas* doth belong,
 Nor night, nor day, shall my rude musick cease,
 I ask no more, so I *Menalcas* please.”

Philips's Past.

In your last dying speech you bequeath Horace to me, and advise me first to read his ode that begins,

“ Pindarum quisquis,” &c.

Pray, Sir, give me leave to ask you, before we part, if you understand this Ode yourself: from your translation of the few lines you quoted, I am really in doubt. Would you believe it, your expression, “ *too surely engulph him,*” gave me the hiccup. —As you must not exceed me in good-manners, let me recommend some lines worthy your notice: a nice observance of which will infallibly prevent the return of your *cacoethes carpendi*.

“ In Poets, as true Genius is but rare,
 True Taste as seldom is the Critic's share:
 Both must alike from Heav'n derive their light,
 These born to judge, as well as those to write.
 Let such teach others, who themselves excel;
 And censure freely, who have written well.”

Pope.

“ But you, who seek to give and merit fame,
 And justly bear a Critic's noble name;
 Be sure, yourself and your own heart to know;
 How far your Genius, Taste, and Learning go:
 Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet;
 And mark that point where Sense and Dullness meet.”

Ditto,

THE END.

... But know
! those detestable insignificant imbeciles! I see thy dull, thy enervated criticisms, and tell me that I should reverence his memory!

"I have no more," said I, "I have no more."
 "Not aught, not aught, my dear friend,"
 "Which to the good I have in both I bring."
 "And while I live, be diligent in my day,
 : As I am poor and little be my coin."

Bulletin Board

...to read his old that begins, ... your last thing for each you peduncate I force to me, and advise

10. "The Great Wall of China"

return of your earliest correspondence. I am really in doubt. Would you believe it, your edition, "too fairly weighed him," gave me the hiccup.—As you do not exceed me in good-manners, let me recommend some lines to your notice: a nice observance of which will infallibly prevent my being again so grossly deceived.

I am, Sir, give me leave to ask you, before we part, if you understand this Ode yourself: from your translation of the few lines quoted, I am really in doubt. Would you believe it, your edition, "too fairly weighed him," gave me the hiccup.—As you

And capture freely who have written well,
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And mark that point where Grief and Delicacy meet.
Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet;
How far your Genius, Taste, and Learning go;
Be true, you'll tell, and your own heart to know;
And justly bear a Critic's noble name;
But you, who seek to give and merit fame.

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THE END.